

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-36 are pending in the present application, with Claims 1, 15, and 24 being the independent claims. Claims 15-23 have been withdrawn from consideration.

Claims 1 and 24 have been amended. Support for these amendments can be found in the original specification, and therefore no new matter has been added.

Claims 1-14 and 24-36 are rejected under 35 U.S. C. 103(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,122,403 (Rhoads). Claims 10 and 35 are rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rhoads in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,334,721 (Horigane). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons discussed below.

As recited in independent Claim 1, the present invention includes, *inter alia*, the features of extracting from an image first information, including a registration signal used to correct geometrical distortion of an image, and employing the results of extracting the first information to determine whether or not a process for extracting digital watermark information from the image is to be performed. With this feature, it is not necessary to *always* perform a process for extracting digital watermark information from an image. Instead, based on the result of extracting the first information from the image, an unnecessary extraction of digital watermark information can be avoided.

Applicants submit that the cited art fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned combination of features. Rhoads discloses that a previously embedded registration signal is extracted and used to perform geometrical correction (column 83,

lines 37-62). Rhoads also discloses judging whether or not the extracted registration signal is an authentic registration signal by attempting to extract other embedded additional information after performing the geometrical correction. A judgment is made as to whether the target image is a correctly geometrical corrected image by confirming the correctness of the extracted additional information (col. 83, line 63 - col. 84, line 32). Thus, while Rhoads does disclose extracting a registration signal and extracting additional information, that patent does not disclose or suggest that performing extraction of the additional information is conditional based on the results of extracting the registration signal. In other words, Rhoads discloses that the extraction of the additional information is always performed, and there is no determination of whether to perform a process for extracting the additional information.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Rhoads fails to disclose or suggest at least the feature of employing the results obtained at a first extraction step to determine whether or not a process for extracting digital watermark information from an image is to be performed.

Horigane is also not understood to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned features and does not remedy the above-noted deficiencies of Rhoads.

For the foregoing reasons, independent Claim 1 is believed patentable over the art of record, whether that art is considered individually or in combination. Independent Claim 24 recites features similar to Claim 1. In particular, Claim 24 recites employing the results obtained at a first information extracting step to determine whether or not a process for extracting digital watermark information from an image is to be performed. Therefore, Claim 24 is believed patentable for reasons similar to Claim 1.

The dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as their respective independent claims, as well as for the additional features recited in the dependent claims.

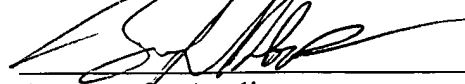
In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Request for Personal Interview

Applicants believe that a personal interview will be beneficial in advancing prosecution of this application. Accordingly, when the Examiner takes up this application for action, it is requested that she contact Applicants' undersigned representative to schedule a personal interview.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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